



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4
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ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

June 30, 2014

Mr. John F. Sullivan, III, P.E.
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administrator
310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 410
Raleigh, N.C. 27601

SUBJECT: Federal Final Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for the Monroe Bypass/Connector Toll Facility, Union and Mecklenburg Counties, N.C. TIP Project Nos.: R-3329/R-2559; CEQ No. 20140164

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the subject documents and is commenting in accordance with Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) are proposing to construct an approximate 20-mile, multi-lane, median divided bypass and toll facility from I-485 at US 74 to US 74 between the Towns of Wingate and Marshville in Union and Mecklenburg Counties, N.C.

EPA provided detailed review comments on the Draft Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (DSFEIS) on January 8, 2014, the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on July 12, 2010, and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on June 15, 2009. EPA notes that the transportation agencies provided responses to EPA's DSFEIS comments in Volume 2, Appendix A, pages A1-16 to A1-26. Regarding EPA's comment #14 and response on Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATs), EPA reiterates its recommendation that the transportation agencies provide the basic identification of potential near-roadway sensitive receptors required to make a valid evaluation or analysis of possible effects from the new multi-lane, 'low-volume' facility (i.e., Less than 96,000 vehicles per day). The transportation agencies are proposing a 70-foot median for a US highway with the ultimate intention of being able to provide additional interior lanes in the future and still maintaining a typical 46-foot grassed standard median.

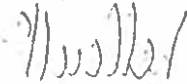
EPA notes that numerous special project commitments ("Green sheets") are included in the second Record of Decision (ROD) at PC-1 to PC-3. Numerous environmental issues are deferred to final design, including a Design Noise Study, potential school bus route impacts, the potential conflict with the CSX rail mainline, hazardous material site assessments, archaeological

resources such as the Hasty-Fowler-Secret Cemetery site, incorporation of hazardous spill basins, and several protected species. It should be clarified if addressing some of these remaining issues such as hazardous spill basins and the CSX rail mainline will potentially increase Section 4040 jurisdictional impacts from what is currently identified in the combined FSFEIS/ROD.

EPA plans to continue coordination with the transportation agencies on the proposed toll facility during final design and permitting. EPA requests that the transportation agencies continue to explore opportunities for additional avoidance and minimization measures for jurisdictional resources. EPA also request that FHWA and NCDOT further explore opportunities to reduce air toxic emissions during construction from diesel equipment by utilizing low-sulfur diesel and employing other minimization measures. EPA recommends that noise barriers as appropriate be considered and utilized near potential sensitive receptors such as schools and day care facilities.

EPA requests that the transportation agencies prepare and provide an amended ROD should impacts substantially change during final design efforts by the FHWA/NCDOT design team. Should you or your staff have any questions concerning these comments, please feel free to contact Mr. Christopher A. Militscher of my staff at 404-562-9512. Dr. Cynthia Van Der Wiele of my staff at 919-450-6811 is also assisting on this proposed project and will be working with other team representatives on upcoming field work for final design efforts.

Sincerely,



Heinz J. Mueller, Chief
NEPA Program Office
Office of Environmental Accountability

Cc: R. Hancock, NCDOT
J. Harris, NCDOT
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